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Editor's Note: Past issues of the HOC UPDATE have addressed the topic of employment. The HOC UPDATE is a vehicle for sharing ideas and concerns about credentialing-related issues as well as updating HOC's clientele about changes in procedures or processes. These articles identify concepts of the author and are not necessarily the opinion of or endorsed by KDHE. In the following article, published with permission, Ken Lerman offers suggestions to support a talented, stable workforce.

Bar Your Doors

There has always been much anxiety associated with employee terminations. At best, it's uncomfortable for both employee and employer. Moreover, the U. S. business owner must always stay within the prevailing legal boundaries and legal interpretations. Should you unknowingly get near the boundaries of "unlawful termination," you might be paying big plaintiff legal dollars.

There is a way to minimize your risk as it affects employee turnover and termination - "bar your doors" against those who would hurt your business. Be just as careful in selecting who you invite to work in your business as you would in allowing strangers to enter your home.

Talent is your most important and expensive business resource of today and of tomorrow. Your business performance, in part, reflects the performance of your weakest talent. Therefore, your effective investment of time, energy, focus and dollars in screening for and in hiring good long-term talent is certainly warranted.

Past all the technical and aptitude skills tests, past medical and reference checks, there are several employer steps you should take to further ensure you're "inviting" the right employee into your business. It is your responsibility to provide the environment for the success of every employee you hire. You must provide a clear understanding of what is expected, how your expectations will be monitored and what assistance ("coaching") will be available to further develop individual employee skills and talent.

Your attention to the following might reduce and minimize employee turnover and termination.

- **UPDATED JOB DESCRIPTIONS:** Staffing a new or current position is an excellent opportunity to review, re-document and prioritize (weight) the key responsibilities of the position. Note: job responsibilities - not job procedures. There should be no doubt in your mind, the supervisor's mind, and in the candidate's mind exactly what is expected in the employee performance to this position. The documented job description should be reviewed in each interview held with the candidate. I enjoy reviewing the key responsibilities of the position with a candidate and then looking them square in the eye and asking, "Will doing all of this make you happy? Is this what you want to do? Will you do this?"
- **EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE REVIEWS:** Clearly communicate, within the employment interview, that the performance of the individual holding this position will be evaluated to the job description responsibilities. You should also review with the candidate what your employee performance policy and procedures are - formal and informal, how periodic, who reviews, when, etc. You should clearly communicate how individual employee compensation is impacted by individual employee performance.
- **BUSINESS VISION:** Every company should have a documented Business Vision of Purpose and Self-Image. This is a statement of how we want our company and its employees to be perceived by others and by ourselves. Read the documented business vision to the candidate. Inform them that this is what our employees are continuously striving to become and this is the environment (culture) that we operate our business in. Ask the candidate, "Is this you? Is this an environment that you would feel comfortable in? Will your behavior positively reinforce our vision of purpose and self-image?"

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- In summary, good employee relationships begin with your ability and effort to screen for productive talent and in your developing a working environment that generates employee performance success.

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CMA Program Update...

Curriculum and test development for the medication aide program is progressing. The first draft of the curriculum is being edited by HOC. The first draft of the test questions has been reviewed by the test development committee.

A survey of CMA programs in other states was conducted in January 2001 by HOC as part of the process of reviewing and recommending changes to CMA regulations, policies and procedures. Seventeen of the states contacted certify medication aides. Thirty-two states do not. The information below summarizes some of the information from the states that have a medication aide program.

- The hours of training required range from eight to 140 hours. The majority of courses require between 40 and 80 hours.
- Sponsors include schools, nursing facilities, state agencies, nursing home associations, independent trainers and a pharmacy.
- Correspondence courses are allowed in three states.
- Recertification requirements vary from none (in five states) to eight hours of continuing education plus having worked 400 hours as a CMA in the past two years.
- Nursing students and medication aides from other states with equivalent training may take the test without taking the course in some states. Two states allow nurse aides to take the test without taking the course. Two states do not allow anyone to take the test without taking the course.
- Three states require a reading test. Others rely on nursing facility staff or the instructor's evaluation or require a high school diploma or GED.
- Approved instructors include licensed RNs, LPNs, pharmacists, physician assistants and medication aides.
- The test is given by the instructor/school in the majority of the states surveyed. The test is given by the state in three states.
- Two states do not have a curriculum for the course. Instead, one has guidelines with 14 specified competencies which must be taught by the sponsor of the course. The other has six competencies defined in regulation which must be taught by the sponsor of the course.

The CMA curriculum development committee is drafting suggested changes to the Kansas CMA program. Currently, the medication aide program in Kansas requires 60 hours of training. Sponsors include schools. Correspondence courses are not allowed. Recertification requires successful completion of a 10-hour CMA update course. Nursing students and interstates with equivalent training may take the test without taking the course. Kansas requires a reading test which must be passed at an 8th grade level. Approved instructors include RNs who have two years RN experience. The test is given by the instructor/school.

HOC Update

Decrease in Number of Candidates for Nursing Home Administrator Test . . .

The number of Kansas candidates taking the national test for nursing home administrators has decreased. Forty candidates took the test in 2000. That number is down 25% from the number who took the test in 1999 (53) and down 35% from a four-year average of 61.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

“Q” Nurse aide has lost certificate, or certificate has been destroyed, how does aide get a new certificate?

“A” Health Occupations Credentialing has a form that the aide completes and submits along with appropriate legal documentation for certificate replacement and name change, or to update the Kansas Nurse Aide Registry (KNAR). It is referred to as a Name Change Form. This form needs to be completed and submitted along with a fee of \$10 to our office to obtain a duplicate certificate. This is also the opportunity to update the KNAR with the most current information, name change, address, phone number, etc. To receive this form call (785) 296-0056.

Verifying Certification Status . . .

Please remember that the Kansas Nurse Aide Registry can verify the certification status of certified nurse aides, medication aides and home health aides. It is not necessary to wait until the certified aide has a certificate in hand in order to be eligible for employment. The KNAR can give verbal confirmation followed by a written confirmation which is printed that day and mailed within one business day. This would help frantic aides who call or show up at the front desk pleading that HOC expedite printing their individual card... "because they won't hire me if I don't have my certificate."

Because of the volume of cards processed, it is not possible to provide wallet certificates on demand. As an employer, you can help both the aide and HOC by utilizing the KNAR as your earliest, reliable verification of certification. Thank you!

Help Us Help You . . .

Not getting information when you expect can be very frustrating. It takes approximately **four weeks** from the test date to have the tests scored, scores recorded, and certificates/results mailed. There are nearly 500 individuals who test each month. If everyone calls . . . you can imagine what happens! So that we can get the test results processed quickly, please refrain from calling to check on individual results. This only ties up the person answering that question from numerous other processing steps. If you are an employer or instructor, you can always check the Kansas Nurse Aide Registry. Results are first recorded on the KNAR. Once the test results are on the registry, you may request a confirmation letter in order to hire a person who has passed and become certified. Calling those who are responsible for scheduling tests and producing the certificates and failure letters will only hinder their ability to get the results out timely. If you want to check the status of certification, please call the Nurse Aide Registry (785-296-6877). From the registry you can obtain information on five persons at a time. Or, you can e-mail Betty Domer at bdomer@kdhe.state.ks.us, and she will respond to your inquiry as soon as possible. Your assistance and cooperation are appreciated!

Nursing Assistants Week: June 7-14, 2001
Career Nursing Assistants' Day: June 7, 2001

Great Job!!



You Are Appreciated!

Thanks!

HOC Update

<i>Assistance With The Following</i>	<i>Call</i>
Forms or not sure who to call... Forms may be downloaded from internet	785-296-0056 www.kdhe.state.ks.us/hoc
Initial license, license renewal, reinstatement or verification (adult care home administrator, dietitian, speech-language pathologist, audiologist)	Brenda Nesbitt 785-296-0061
Health Occupations Credentialing Act	Marla Rhoden 785-296-6647
Aide training courses, sponsorship programs, course approvals, continuing education approval for licensees	Dolores Staab 785-296-6796
Test scheduling for aides or challenging an aide test with higher education; forms	Betty Domer 785-296-1250
Medication aides; forms	Stephanie McCown 785-296-0060
Instructor approval/aide course, interstate or reciprocity for aides	Fran Breedlove 785-296-0059 after 3:00 p.m.
Test for ACHA, education policies	Martha Ryan 785-296-0058
Criminal background check program Criminal background request forms	Steve Irwin 785-296-8628 Sarita Everett 785-296-6958
Open records request	Tania Peeters 785-296-1284
KANSAS NURSE AIDE REGISTRY (785) 296-6877 Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 and 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.	

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New Web-Based CMA-Update Course . . .

Congratulations to Johnson County Community College! They have developed the first computerized on-line medication aide

update course to be offered in Kansas. They applied for and received KDHE approval for this course in February 2001.

The cost for enrollment to the student is \$10.20 for Kansas residents (\$67.70 for out of state residents), plus the \$10.00 fee to KDHE to renew their medication aide certification.

Johnson County Community College has designed this course for students to access by computer either on or off campus, at the convenience of the student. There are no scheduled on-campus meetings, and all course materials will be available through WebCT. Contact Karen Glessner at (913) 469-8500, ext. 4772, or e-mail kgless@jccc.net for enrollment information or hardware/software requirements.

PTA/OTA Nurse Aide Bridge Course . . .

The first PTA/OTA nurse aide bridge course was given in July 2000. The bridge course consists of 12 hours of didactic instruction and 12 hours of clinical instruction. The student must successfully pass the course, the nurse aide skills competency checklist and the state nurse aide test to be certified as a nurse aide. The course was designed to supplement the PTA/OTA training so that PTAs/OTAs might also be certified as nurse aides without having to take the 90-hour nurse aide course. As of March 19, 2001, four PTA/OTA nurse aide bridge courses have been offered. Twenty of the 21 students who have taken the course passed the test and were certified.

➡ **- Valuable Information May Be Found on
HOC Web Page. . .**

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